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## THE MISSION OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY.

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THE events and processes of more than a generation have taken the control of governmental affairs away from the intelligent rule of the masses and vested it in a power as yet formative and undefined. Among these were the civil war, the creation and peculiar manipulation of the public debt, reconstruction outside the Constitution, universal negro suffrage, a plethora of paper money, loose public morals, enormous growth of private fortunes, and a close connection of the government with the banking interest. Each had its weight in sapping the foundations of a government by the masses, and in shaping our course toward a different rule. Whether that rule is to be suffrage, qualified and rarified, or suffrage controlled by the power of aggregated wealth or monopoly, or a senatorial oligarchy, or hereditary government, is beside the present inquiry, save as they each and all show distrust of the people, and build their foundations upon universal suffrage, debased, corrupted, and dominated.

The tendency toward a so-called stronger government is as manifest as are the causes that have given it form. It is in the nature of things for government to grow stronger at the expense of the governed; but the plain proof of the existence of this tendency is found in the opinions of the federal judiciary, in federal legislation over matters heretofore within the control of the people of the States, in the modes of execution of those statutes, by which local rule, local courts, and personal liberty are overthrown, and in that ramification of Executive patronage which sends its mandates to the extremities, and at will gathers in a single hand enormous contributions and unscrupulous obedience from ninety thousand paid officials. "Executive patronage will bring us to a master." A net-work of office-holders, bound each to the other, wielding time and money and power of place to pack primaries, dictate nominations, crush independent thought and action, and subordinate local control to the will of an Executive who governs in the name of party, points the road with unerring certainty to the end that Franklin, the wise man, predicted.

Further guide-boards on that road are seen in large donations of money by corporations, monopolists, and wealthy men, to supplement the power of the Executive, and carry elections in the interest of an aristocratic class who dislike and distrust the people; in the domination of employé by employer; in the marked ballot; in the third-term candidacy and pilgrimage on the stump; in the National and Labor organizations, which are but overzealous protests against this tendency, and in that ill-concealed demand for energetic government, which has been the fundamental thought of the opponents of Democracy since the days of John Adams.

The issues of 1799 and 1800 again confront the people. The theories of that day are again to struggle for the mastery. The government of the republic is already centralized. The canvass of 1880 teaches this. The federal Executive has been felt from the ward caucus to the vaults of the Treasury, from the primary to the Presidential election. A high federal official quits his place to take a nomination for governor of the pivotal State, and at once the Executive arm is extended to his support. Marshals, detectives, collectors, secretaries, and all else that are needed, locate themselves within the State, and its suffrage is debauched and its undoubted will reversed. A suffrage, first debased, then corrupted, then obedient, is centralization in its worst form. This is but one means to the end sought. The mission of the Democratic party is decentralization. Its duty is to restore the government of the republic to the intelligent rule of the masses of the people. It must teach and practice the doctrines of its illustrious founder. It must appeal to the people themselves in their own interest. It must preach the eternal truth that the individual citizen is the unit in government, from whom proceeds all power, in whom is vested all rights save those which are granted by him for the good of the whole. The people at the base, the States and the federal government each supreme within its sphere, is the system to which it looks for liberty, and it must teach that he who looks to paternal government, to centralization, or to empire, looks to despotism. Care for and perfect the government, and it will protect the liberties of the people, was the thought of Hamilton. Give intelligence and information to the people, teach them that it is their government, and their interest to preserve law and order, was the thought of Jefferson. Paternal government and vigor in the federal head on the one hand, information to the masses and energy from the extremities

on the other. The former gave the republic alien and sedition laws, direct taxation, federal marshals, and centralized rule in 1799. The latter swept these out of existence in 1800; carried us successfully through two foreign wars; acquired an empire of territory, and governed the country for sixty years. We must choose between these two now. The Democracy must again plant itself upon the axiom, "Governments are made for men, not men for governments." It must strike with mailed hand the tendency to strong government. It must be true to the people and aggressive in its fealty. Dominated labor must be taught its rights and its interests. Capital must see its safety in the intelligence and justice of individual rule, and not in the exercise of arbitrary will. Honest performance of every governmental contract now in existence, but a change of policy by which the debt shall be managed in the interest of the people and not of the creditor; equal taxation on every form of property; thorough inquiry into taxation for revenue and its re-adjustment upon a basis just to every interest and to all the people; no monopolies; forfeiture of the franchises of corporations and punishment of aggregated wealth, or individuals, for coercion of employés, or the use of money in elections; our own carrying trade made to be our own preserve; and a divorce between government and banks, are thoughts which find place in such an issue. The cry of a "Solid South" is exhausted and impotent at last. It has served its purpose. Divided councils upon questions of administration have kept the Democracy a mere party of opposition, and concealed the silent approaches of the enemy to strong government. It will continue to be a party in opposition, untrusted and untried, until it defiantly asserts its ancient theories and goes to the people for their vindication.

The Democratic party is not dead. Antæus-like, after each defeat it arises from the people stronger than before. It cannot die whilst it teaches and believes in the rights of the masses. The hour for its triumph will have come when it boldly asserts its true theories and ignores the blandishments of money, monopoly, and corrupt power. He whose interests, judgment, or teachings are adverse to the rule of the masses will join its enemies, but in his room it will recruit scores of those in whose interests it strikes, or who respect its attitude and detest strong government. The future of the Democratic party is the future of the republic.

WILLIAM A. WALLACE.